

Agassiz Neighborhood Study Committee
February 27, 2001
Lesley University presentation

AGASSIZ NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY COMMITTEE

Lesley University Presentation

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| Neighborhood Study Committee: | Joel Bard, Amy Barad, Debby Galef, Dave Wood |
| Absent: | Miriam Goldberg, Fred Meyer, Ross Hoffman |
| Community resident: | Madeline McDowell |
| Community Development Department: | Venita Mathias |
| Lesley University: | David Earlandson, Vice President of Operations Paul Karoff, Vice President for University Affairs |

David Earlandson, Vice President of Operations for Lesley University, presented the early history of the university and the current long-range planning process.

History

Lesley University was founded 90 years ago in 1909, as a small post-high school for kindergarten teachers and was located at 29 Everett Street. It was named the Lesley Normal School. In 1944, Lesley became a college. The college was located in two buildings, one on Everett Street and the other in the basement and first floor of Stebbins Hall. When Lesley was granted college status, the 2nd and 3rd floors were built on Stebbins Hall. White Hall was built in 1957 and contained the first large scale dining hall and dormitory space for the students. Currently, the university's main campus is located on Everett, Mellen, Sacramento, and Wendell Streets.

Property Acquisition

In 1994, the University acquired the Porter Exchange from RTC and now houses some administrative offices and classrooms/studios in the space. A major function of the Exchange is as a revenue producer for the university. The university currently occupies

the top two floors (3rd and 4th) of the Exchange. The top two floors total 55,000 sq.ft of space. The ground floor and basement are all retail. University functions at 49 Washington Avenue will soon be relocated to the main campus.

The east and west block area of the campus was acquired in 1970. The campus moved in this direction as several wooden structures were razed. Rental properties were purchased on Sacramento, Mellen, Wendell, and Everett Streets. Recently, the university was gifted three properties from George and Henrietta Alegis at 3 Wendell Street, 1663 and 1680 Massachusetts Avenue. As the properties' current leases expire, the university will decide how to use the space. In 1987, 17 Mellen Street was purchased from the city. It was an abandoned lodging house that was condemned. The university gutted the building and rebuilt it as a 6-unit lodging house.

Renovations

In 1988, a new facade was built on the dining hall. In 1995, Lesley's master plan identified a number of properties that have since undergone renovation such as 7 Mellen Street. Ultimately, 7 properties were completely renovated. Renovation was scattered throughout the campus and 1627 Mass Avenue is now the office for the Vice President of Human Resources and the Vice President of University Affairs. 13 Mellen and 16 Wendell were also renovated.

Long range planning

The university is in the very early stages of developing a long-range 5 year master plan. The university has recently established a committee of the board of trustees that have long range planning as their mandate. Five years makes sense for university purposes given some issues related to the Porter Exchange building and space that will become available for university use when one of the tenants' lease expires. Smithsonian Astrophysics Lab leases the second floor and their lease expires on December 31, 2005. The second floor space is equal to the space on the top two floors combined that the university currently occupies.

Since 1974, the university has owned property at 49 Washington Avenue on Avon Hill. The university has a signed purchase and sale agreement to sell the property and will close on the property on the 25th of May 2001. A private party is purchasing the property and it will revert back to a residential use. The carriage house is part of the purchase. This sale will allow the university a short-term opportunity to relocate the School of Management back on the main campus and deal with some other space issues.

The university has just signed a lease for 20,000-sq. ft. of space in the basement of the Porter Galleria. 65 employees from various administrative units will move into the basement space. The university has a five-year lease with various options. It provides an interim solution because in five years (2006) 55,000 sq. ft. of space will become available for university use.

The 10 Sacramento Street property is scheduled to be returned to residential use at the end of the year, December 31, 2001. The university will be making a presentation in April at the Agassiz Neighborhood Council to discuss this issue.

The university's long range planning is focused on the year 2005. Specifically, where the university will be and what its needs will be at that time. There has been some thought to relocate the library which would free up space at the main campus.

The university currently spends about \$2,000/month when classes are in session on student vouchers to park either at Alewife or Quincy Adams MBTA stations. There may be a chance for discussion down the road about using Harvard's planned Hammond Street underground parking garages in the evening when use is not as heavy.

Paul Karoff, Vice President for University Affairs presented the university's academic history.

Academic development

Lesley University has an 8,000-student population. Most of the students attend classes and programs off campus at 150 sites and locations around the country both overseas and in 16 other states. The university has a large program in Israel. Over half of the students never set foot on the Cambridge campus. Future growth is foreseen in the off campus, off site programs.

In October 1998, Lesley acquired the Art Institute of Boston (AIB); a four-year visual arts school located in Kenmore Square. The school is housed in two separate buildings. One at 600 Beacon Street off of Kenmore Square, and the other around the corner at the end of Newbury Street. The acquisition meant a 500+ person increase in undergraduate students for Lesley and allowed the university to introduce new programs including a couple of new MFA programs. There has been some cross-registration between students in Cambridge and AIB and vice versa. The university has a shuttle that runs between the Cambridge campus and the Art Institute in Kenmore Square.

In September 2000, Lesley officially changed it's name from Lesley college to Lesley university to more accurately reflect the institution that the university has become. The university is the 9th largest graduate degree-granting program in the US and the number 1 institution in the country in terms of graduate degrees for teachers, which is the university's main focus. The off-campus programs make the university such a large player in graduate education.

The university anticipates limited to no growth in on-campus programs in the foreseeable future. The university is at a size that makes the most sense for a traditional undergraduate program in the women's college. The university does anticipate growth in the off-campus programs in Mass, around New England, and in other states. With the exception of the traditional undergraduate program, the student population is a non-traditional one made up of adults and part-time students.

Q and A

Q. What are the university's plans for 3 Wendell Street

A. Currently it is important to the university's parking program. Used as a Lesley parking lot. It is currently in a C-1 residential zone so it remains to be seen what future use would be.

Q. Do you see any changes in the property that houses the Threshold Program and dormitories.

A. It is administrative office space for Special Programs. It's in a C-1 residence. It is currently a non-conforming use so the university doesn't have much flexibility in what it could do with the property. The Threshold Program has 45 students and has been near and dear to the institution for the past 20 years and continues to do well. Right now the program has benefited from being integrated on the Lesley campus. Currently, there are no plans for physical changes to the property.